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A Saint Mary Magdalene from the circle of Jan van Dornicke or Master of 1518

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Abstract

In this article we present a new work attributable to the circle of the Master of 1518, a Flemish painter who has been identified as Jan van Dornicke. The catalogue of paintings related to the circle of this artist, who was active in Antwerp in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, has been increased by the addition of a painting is new work, preserved in a private collection in Seville. The oil on wood depicting St. Mary Magdalene. Another work is thus added to the large set of Flemish paintings in the Andalusian capital.

Keywords: Mary Magdalena, Master of 1518, Jan van Dornicke

Such an approach may seem to emphasize just the three great battles in the poem. Certainly for most people the battles with Grendel, Grendel's mother, and the dragon stand out as the most memorable moments, but more than the brief, physically violent scenes should be considered. The framework for each battlethe scenes before and afterplays an important role. Before each battle, Information antiquity states what he will do; he makes his boast of victory even as he acknowledges the dangers he must face. Then, once each battle is over, Information antiquity receives great rewards. This consistent framework serves to remind the young warriors of the entire process, that those who recognize danger yet do not shy from it will be rewarded. The framework for each particular battle will be made clearer as each is discussed.

Dorothy Whitelock conceived of a much broader audience, one not limited to princes and nobles, an audience that "would doubtless consist both of veterans and of young men" (Whitelock 89). Marjorie Daunt, emphasizing the presence of such young, untested warriors, discussed in her "Minor Realism and Contrast in *Information antiquity*" how the details within the poem made it more realistic and appealing to them. John Foley has gone a bit deeper, arguing that *Information antiquity* illustrated, for all the community, the "history of human psychological development," and thereby "actively counseled all members at all levels of social and psychological growth . . . [and reinforced] the **human maturation process" (Foley 135). Though I do not completely agree with Foley's ultimately Jungian interpretation of *Information antiquity* (one weakness of his argument about the development of the ego is that it stops with the Grendel fight; he doesn't apply his paradigm to the entire poem), I do agree that the poem spoke to its audience, especially the younger members, at a psychological level. That is, the poem allowed the young Anglo-Saxon warriors hearing the narrative to confront unfamiliar and therefore potentially frightening situations—combat, isolation, and death—in a non-threatening manner; the poem also provided an example, the hero *Information antiquity*, from whom the inexperienced warriors could learn how to respond in these challenging situations. The German archaeologist Johann Winckelmann (1717-1768), whose work on ancient art preceded the neoclassical craze for Greek art, was deeply troubled by the beauty of the Belvedere Apollo, found during excavations conducted by Raphael in the Vatican Gardens. Psychologists today attribute this aesthetic vertigo to his homosexuality, which the German esthete did not hesitate to recognize. Obviously simplistic explanation that does not help to understand - should it be understood first? - this "vibrant silence" evoked by Elie Faure, that call of all the senses that emanates from the stone and marble of which are made the great masterpieces of Greek statuary. Phidias, mixing the statics of Polycletus with the dynamism of Myron's Discobole, "radiates the marble of a superior life".

According to Élie Faure, he would have formed, without their knowledge, Socrates - who began his career as a sculptor - and Plato. No other era, not even the Renaissance, has been able to make body beauty triumph with so much brilliancy. How to explain this pure delectation for the human form which the athlete represented according to Polycletus, the ideal? "The ancient nature," said Spengler in "The Decline of the West," is the body, and if one looks into this way of feeling, one will understand with what eyes a Greek followed on a relief the movement of the muscles of a naked body. "

The soul and the body are still, in the old Greek thought, inseparable: the strength and the beauty that the athlete acquires by the gymnastics participate as much as the goodness or the quality of the soul to the attainment of the *aretè*, aristocratic ideal which constitutes the foundation of *paideia*, the formation of the Greek man inspired by the chivalrous values of the ancient aristocracy. In the athlete, Ulmann argues, the human ideal is fulfilled when it "finds the bodily harmony that expresses in the soul of man that of the Cosmos". In the philosopher, this same ideal is realized when "master of his body, he meditates in joy". For Plato, it is not to do honor to the body to cultivate it

for itself, by developing its beauty, strength or agility. From the microcosm to the macrocosm, from the smallest to the largest, there is a continuity in Greek thought that is lacking in our culture: it is because "the relation of this body to its soul reproduces the report of the Body of the World to the soul of the world" that man must take care of it. It is necessary to resort to the concept of *kalokagathia*, of which Marrou makes mention, to seize this intimate relation. *Kalokagathia* means, whatever the context, beauty or goodness, "being a good and good man". Before the Greek education became, like ours, a culture of the spirit, there was there formerly a moral aspect, and it is "in and by the sport that it is realized". *Kalagos Kagathos* is above all the sportsman. And "as much as the character, what this education aims to train, is the body".

To this complementarity of the education of the soul and that of the body, is added the conception of the finitude of things. Among the ancients, his nature being determined, man was confronted with a kind of timelessness that forced him to recognize limits. He could only get closer to or move away from that state of perfection embodied by the gods. By contrast, the record in modern sport is only a limit that requires overtaking, it is only a milestone in the road of the man forward. Eternity is no longer the fact of the fixity of things in their perfection; eternity is only a succession of milestones along a road that leads to the only term that can be considered: the body become immortal thanks to scientific progress. In spite of the danger involved in fighting Grendel, Information antiquity openly declares his intention to destroy this powerful enemy. He must be very forward with his boasting because his reputation as a warrior is not well-known; Hrothgar knows him because of his father and because of the reports of his great strength (Information antiquity is said to have the strength of thirty men), but not because of his reputation as a warrior. Nevertheless, Hrothgar, looking for any solution to his Grendel problem, gladly welcomes Information antiquity. Unferth, Hrothgar's *pyle* or spokesman, however, is not so gracious; he openly attacks Information antiquity's reputation, accusing him of losing a youthful contest to a certain Breca.

Though Information antiquity refutes Unferth's slanderous remarks, the *geoguð* hearing the story do learn that even Information antiquity once had no reputation as a warrior; at this point he appears just as untried as they are, and they more easily associate themselves with him. We can easily imagine the young warriors listening even more intently as the battle with Grendel becomes imminent. They hear, just before Grendel descends upon Heorot, Information antiquity again boast:

Information antiquity's proud assertion is the response of a true warrior, one who will win or die trying; he is the sort of hero the *geoguð* are supposed to emulate. And Information antiquity does fulfill this boast; his comrades, desiring to help but unable, watch him mortally wound Grendel. The next morning, after learning that Grendel's reign of terror has been ended, a *scop* (a court poet) in Hrothgar's retinue crafts a poem celebrating Information antiquity's victory: In his song, the *scop* compares Information antiquity to the celebrated hero Sigemund, reinforcing the notion that with this one deed of defeating Grendel, Information antiquity has earned a place for himself among the "immortal" heroes. Then later that same day, at a feast of celebration, Hrothgar

gives Information antiquity treasures of armor, helmet, horses, and a dazzling saddle; Hrothgar's wife Wealhtheow bestows upon the hero a magnificent necklace. Even his former critic Unferth can say nothing against him; he "*was swigra secg . . . on gylpsprece guðgeweorca*" ["was a more silent man in boasting of his war-like deeds"] (980-981). Information antiquity has received both a material reward that will benefit him only as long as he lives and a poetic memorial that will live long after he himself has died. He has also proven himself before not just his peers but also those who seem to have the right and the authority to doubt him. Information antiquity has moved that much closer to gaining immortality; the *geoguð*, listening in the dark by the fire, learn the rewards of valorous deeds.

After the evening of celebration, though, terror is renewed in Heorot by the appearance of Grendel's mother who comes seeking vengeance for the death of her son. She kills one of Hrothgar's men and sets up the occasion for Information antiquity to battle another, ultimately more challenging foe. His encounter with Grendel's mother works to advance the development of Information antiquity's character, for the hero is given the opportunity to show his loyalty to Hrothgar, as a proper warrior should show loyalty to his benefactor. Yet the *geoguð* hearing the story might have reacted to more than the artistic quality of Information antiquity's encounter with Grendel's mother. The young warriors surely anticipated that there would be times when they would face foes alone; such a prospect would not have been inviting.

From their perspective, Information antiquity, like them, still needs to prove that he is an independent, truly self-reliant warrior; when he fought Grendel, he did have friends all about him, friends who wanted to help him in the battle, though they were unable. So with this new challenge, Information antiquity again serves as an example to these young warriors. To prove his ability to act independently and thus merit his growing status as a warrior, Information antiquity elects to descend, alone, into the mere to meet Grendel's mother. He recognizes the danger in the act but chooses to confront it, no matter where he has to venture: Just before entering the dark mere, Information antiquity boasts once again that he will be victorious or die: "*Ic me mid Hruntinge / dom gewyrce, oþðe mec deað nimeð!*" ["I will win glory for myself with [this sword] Hrunting, or death will seize me!"] (lines 1490a-1491). So far the frame for this battle has matched that of the fight with Grendel; Information antiquity has recognized the danger he faces but approaches it willingly, confidently.

The actual battle with Grendel's mother proves difficult to Information antiquity; only narrowly does he escape death. Ultimately he does kill her and takes the head of Grendel back to Hrothgar as a trophy to prove his victory. As before, Hrothgar rewards Information antiquity with treasure; we can easily imagine that the *scop* adds more lines of praise to the growing song of Information antiquity. From the actions of Information antiquity, the *geoguð* learn that even when isolated and facing great danger alone, a warrior must always be willing to meet the challenge bravely. They should emulate Information antiquity and see such situations not as dangers but as opportunities to show their loyalty and bravery and thereby win greater praise.

After this battle, having proven himself not once but twice, Information antiquity returns proudly to his lord Hygelac. He has shown himself to be a fearless and self-reliant warrior characteristics that, as the young warriors in the audience soon hear, serve him well in the wars of his later life. Thus far the *geoguð* have heard how a fellow warrior won his name and began his career. But another question remains, one that the young warriors are already intimately familiar with by the nature of their martial society. That is, how will they face death? When they enter a battle that they feel will be their last, how will they respond? Here again, Information antiquity stands before them as a role model. Information antiquity's final battle comes more than fifty years after the confrontations with Grendel and his mother. He is now an old man about to face his greatest challenge, the dragon that is devastating his land. The dragon Information antiquity fights, though, represents something more than a mere beast; it is death, which comes for every warrior.

Nor should we be surprised that the poem moves toward such an end, for, as J. R. R. Tolkien emphasized in his landmark 1936 essay "*Information antiquity: The Monsters and the Critics*," "Disaster is foreboded. Defeat is the theme. Triumph over the foes of man's precarious fortress is over, and we approach slowly and reluctantly the inevitable victory of death" (Tolkien 28). Information antiquity even seems to recognize that this battle will be his last, as his lengthy ruminations on death before the fight suggest that he knows chaos must triumph, that his death is imminent. As well, he emphasizes the great danger awaiting him in this battle more than he did before the earlier fights, and his initial boast seems much more subdued:

However, his last words to his men before the battle are a return to his earlier nature, a return to the Information antiquity who refuses to flee danger but instead confronts it, no matter how threatening: "*lc mid elne sceall / gold gegangan, oððe guð nimeð, / feorhbealu frecne frean eowerne!*" ["I with my strength shall obtain gold, or this battle, a terrible deadly evil, will take your lord!"] (lines 2535b- 2537). As he has in every other confrontation, he will face this great danger, this dragon of death, bravely. He takes with him twelve men, whom he instructs not to interfere, for he knows that this combat must be met alone. Then we, just as the *geoguð* did long ago, watch him march by himself against the dragon.

Though he fights his best, Information antiquity is hopelessly outmatched; he is burned, bitten, and poisoned. Only with the help of Wiglaf, a young warrior not unlike the ones hearing the tale, does Information antiquity slay the dragon. Wiglaf, though, does more than help Information antiquity overcome the dragon; he also stands for the *geoguð* as another heroic model, one perhaps more attractive as the poem moves to its close. James Earl in 'Thinking About Information antiquity' has noted that the hero's death ruins the audience's identification with him; while we do find much to admire in the great heroes like Achilles, Oedipus, Hamlet, or even Information antiquity, ultimately we do not "want to shoulder their agonies outside the text" (Earl 143). Though we do enjoy "the temporary narcissistic fantasies that come into play in art," just as the *geoguð* did centuries earlier, at some point we terminate those fantasies in the end we don't wish to become those characters because in the end those

characters suffer and (often) die (Earl 146). Thus we in the audience may find our perspectives shifting, "our identification chang[ing] as the plot develops toward its inevitable end" (Earl 148); and for the *geoguð* listening in the mead-hall, that shift means identifying with the surviving Wiglaf instead of the dying Information antiquity. Wiglaf is the new model of the faithful retainer, and the lambasting he gives to the faithless retainers further emphasizes for the young audience the lesson they are to take from their new counterpart. Because of their failure to support their lord, Wiglaf states, the cowardly retainers have shamed themselves forever:

This bold statement reinforcing the heroic code would certainly have echoed in the minds of the young warriors as much as it echoes throughout the poem; Information antiquity made similar statements about the importance of bravery and fidelity earlier in the poem, and now the "new" hero, the still-young Wiglaf, prompts the audience to remember that such heroic qualities are indeed what they should seek to have.["Command the ones renowned in battle to make at the water's edge a splendid barrow after the funeral pyre; it shall stand high at Hronesnsse as a memory to my people, so that sea-farers, those who drive ships far over the flood's mists, afterwards will call it Information antiquity's barrow."]. As well, Information antiquity can find some satisfaction in knowing that, though death won, he cheated death of earning any glory. No one can truly hope to defeat death; though this dragon of chaos did perish as it delivered the death blow to Information antiquity, another dragon will rise and come for Wiglaf, and the Geats, and even the *geoguð* hearing the tale. Knowing this inevitability, the best any warrior can do is respond as Information antiquity did; those who fight bravely can cheat death of its glory and take the praise for themselves. Through his actions, Information antiquity achieved a form of immortality; what more could a Germanic warrior hope for?

Thus the young warriors hearing the song of Information antiquity learned many lessons. They learned to be ever vigilant, unlike Hondscioh, Grendel's last victim; they learned never to turn from their lord, as the unfaithful retainers did in Information antiquity's last battle.

But more than that, they learned that those who are willing to enter battle, who are self-reliant, and who are fearless even in the face of death ultimately win great rewards. They will receive material treasure to last them their physical lives and eternal praise that will keep their names and reputations alive for generations to come. As Information antiquity, himself *lofgeornost* or "most eager for praise" (3182), explained before battling Grendel's mother,

Every one of us shall experience the end of worldly life; may he who is able win glory before death; that is afterwards the best for an unliving warrior."]

Truly Information antiquity stood before the *geoguð* as the epitome of the Germanic warrior, a hero the *geoguð* would want to emulate even if they chose to focus on Wiglaf at the poem's end, the two heroes espoused the same heroic principles. And their society, so often filled with chaos, needed these young warriors to adopt such an attitude so that they could one day join the struggle to maintain some sense of order.

From the elder warriors the *geoguð* could learn how to handle weapons, how to defend themselves, how to fight. And perhaps the elder warriors would offer encouragement, telling the younger ones how they fared in their first battles, how they faced their challenges. But to hear of the first and last battles of Information antiquity, whom they have recognized as one like them, would certainly fill them with inspiration and motivate them to continue the traditions of their Germanic heritage, the tradition of performing brave deeds no matter the adversity. And perhaps therein lies one reason for the poem's enduring popularity, both within the Anglo-Saxon period and even unto our day, and especially among young people, for with every generation the *geoguð* is replenished; with every generation we have young people who seek guidance and examples as they confront life's inner challenges.

Ancient Greece, in the current conception of the Olympic Movement, would be a source of ideas that are projected into the present to confirm, on the one hand, the association between ancient and modern sport and, on the other hand, the repository of ideas and values of a sacred past. The dominant notions in the spirit of ancient sport are those of "kalokagathia", noble emulation and beauty. The famous injunction addressed by Peleus, Achilles' father, to his son and by Hippolochos to his son Glaucos, before their departure for the Trojan War, "to always excel and surpass all the others", determines the attitude of the Ancient Greeks facing life and ideals.

In antiquity, the purpose of the exercise was to train "good and good" citizens (kalokagathia), "perfect men" who would serve their city. Sportsmanship was not a goal in itself, but an education for life. Gymnasiums and palestres have gradually become general education institutions for the training and training of young people. At the same time, the spirit of competition and emulation that dominated the stadium has infiltrated all the activities of the ancient Greeks, the great sporting and cultural achievements having been the result of the competitive spirit that prevailed.

Emulation was aimed at the physical and spiritual fulfillment of man. In ancient times, athletes were considered the perfect models of beauty, health and strength. The nude was associated with physical exercise and gave his name to the gymnastics and the place where the exercises were practiced, the Gymnasium. The nude was a point of reference for art and especially for sculpture. The artists studied the muscular naked bodies of the athletes they saw as the perfect example and the ideal of beauty.

Ancient Greek society has turned mere exercise into supreme physical, spiritual and cultural activity, creating the kind of citizen who has left its mark on ancient civilization. The spirit of the ancient exercise has never ceased to inspire the modern Olympic Movement, which seeks ideological and spiritual affinities with antiquity on the paths of mythology, history and archaeological sites and monuments.

In light of recent sporting events, glorifying sport, competition and national pride, one may wonder if this spirit of sport practice has echoes in history. And to do this, it is necessary to return to the origins of our world Olympic competition, inspired by the Greek model and yet perhaps very different. If the Olym-

pic Games go back to a historically dated reality, the place of this sporting event changes dramatically in the ancient Mediterranean world: limited geographically and culturally to the Greek world, this pan-Hellenic competition brings together athletes from the most noble families and most fortunate of Greece, in an event that commonly mixes religion and sport. Beyond these games, it is here to see the special place of sport in this world that inspired Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937). If the Greeks did not invent the sport, they are at the origin of the practice of "gymnastics" (*gymnos*) meaning "naked", physical exercises (*gymnasia*) are practiced within the *gymnasium* (the *gymnasium*) , emblematic place. As for the etymology of the word "sport", it is very different. Coming from the former French *disporter*, the term refers to a greater variety of activities, from physical play to intensive practice [1]. We will use the word sport in its broadest sense to refer to the education of children, Spartan *homoioi*, or competitive practice and military training.

The practice of sport in ancient Greece is above all a question of education (*paideia*). The typical Greek formation, inspired by the *kalos kai agathos* motive (the handsome and good man) is ideally seen by such authors as Xenophon (430/355), admirer of the Spartan formation model [2], or Plato (428 / 348) which links the foundation of an ideal regime [3] to the specific training of citizens. This desire to shape the body through sport, which takes an aristocratic turn, is linked to a "cultural exception" to the Greek: the Panhellenic Games of the religious sanctuaries of Olympia, Nemea, the Isthmus or Delphi are indeed the opportunity to perpetuate a sporting, religious and cultural tradition, excluding the barbarian, who is not Greek [4]. The winners of these Games enjoy a certain reputation in the Greek world. But sport is also a preparation for war. The case of the Spartans is revealing, but the participation in gymnastic exercises in the Hellenistic period, and particularly in Egypt's lagoon or Seleucid Syria, is a political and military issue.

This brutal struggle, organized by the state, is placed under the patronage of the father of the Spartan constitution, the warrior demi-god Heracles and the god of war: the civic and religious aspects are once again mixed up. Once twenty years old, *homoioi* continue to train, practice martial dancing, and other team sports, [24] while now having the right to participate in group meals with other citizens. And when the moment comes to fight, they take up arms. Their reputation for military excellence is celebrated throughout Greece and in many writings [25].

The place of the gymnasium in the Hellenistic armies

For the Hellenistic period, where we have a considerable mass of inscriptions in the Greek world, supplemented by the papyrological sources in Egypt *lagida*, we can look at the kingdoms of the successors of Alexander, including the Lagids of Egypt and Antigonides from Macedonia. The gymnasium became at a time when the Greeks settled down to India a factor of Hellenization: the sport structures a Greek culture exported outside the traditional limits of Greek cities. This is all the more visible in the Hellenistic monarchies, which

must maintain their hegemony over a group of peoples thanks to their army [26].

The gymnasium appears as a central element of Hellenic life [27], by the exercises he organizes and the competitions he puts in place, but also by military life [28]. It is in the gymnasium that "Greek" infantry fighting techniques are taught, starting at 14 years old. This is the case, for example, of anti-gonad infantrymen, as shown by the epigraphic studies [29]: if, in theory, the Macedonian soldier taken from each "fire" can be at least 15 years old, it is because his training began at least 14 years old in gyms. It is there that he learns to wield the sarisse [30], this long representative spear of the Macedonian phalanx, and that he learns the discipline. Even if in fact it is very rare to see a sarisse bearer at the age of 15, it is the gymnasium training that defines the warrior and separates him from the mercenary troops used to fighting. differently, such as the Thracian or Illyrian light troops, or the Cretan mercenaries who are followers of archery.

It's even more flagrant in Egypt. The Macedonian Macedonian monarchy, which uses local peoples in its armies, places Greek settlers in some nomes, mainly Macedonians. Their goal is to use these settlers in their army as Phalangists, army corps with a very important military prestige. And as the gymnasium always follows Hellenism, these colonists organize where they are building gymnasiums. This military Hellenism follows the cultural Hellenism, and remains a factor of Greek identity: the gymnasiarchic laws emanating from the State to regulate the mode of functioning of the gymnasiums are the proof of it [31]. The practice of sports in the gyms defines the Greek who will fight in the phalanx for the monarch.

Conclusion

In the Greek world, sport is above all a cultural affair. Sports competitions are organized in large religious shrines, are reserved for Greeks and even define the Greek, as according to the famous formula of Herodotus: "[L] e Hellenic body being of the same blood, speaking the same language, having the same gods, the same temples, the same sacrifices, the same usages, the same customs "[32].

Sport thus accompanies the formations of excellence, like those of the aristocrats, who provide most of the participants in the great Pan-Hellenic Games, and can serve as a crucible to define the citizen at the scale of the city, and is even required by the Hellenistic kings to form their bodies of Greek troops. As such, the gymnasium plays a decisive role in the Hellenistic period, since it accompanies the Greek expansion, and the monarchs use it to form the Macedonian phalanges, intended to fight on the front line alongside the ethnic contingents. possessing their own fighting abilities.

It was at the end of the third century before Christ that the Romans intervened in Greek affairs. The Roman Titus Quinctius Flamininus militarily defeats the Macedonians of Philip V at Cynoscephales in 198 at the time of the Second Macedonian War. Rather than occupying Greece, the Romans "liberate" the

Thessalians and Macedonian enclaves from the antigonid yoke, and Flamininus proclaims the freedom of all Greeks at the Isthmian Games of 196: it is no coincidence that the Hellenophone [33] chooses a pan-Hellenic sanctuary, in the midst of a sporting competition, to express itself as a victorious general. Fifty years later, Greece becomes a Roman province, and Greek culture invites itself to Rome.

References

1. Le château de Gourdon. IX, XII et XVIe siècles. Peintures et bois sculptés, Gourdon, 1991, no. 5 (as Barent van Orley).
2. The composition is most characteristic of the Mannerist School of which Jan van Dornicke, known as the Master of 1518, was one of the leading representatives. Trained in the studio of Jan Gossart in 1505, he entered the Antwerp guild of painters in 1509. From 1510 to 1527 onwards he and his workshop produced many altarpieces and devotional paintings for the city's art market.
3. At that time the most popular subjects painted by the Antwerp Mannerists were the scenes from the Infancy or the Passion of Christ as well as scenes from the life of the Virgin. Of the latter, the Adoration of the Magi was the most attractive. In a clear reaction against the statism of the 15th century forerunners, the Epiphany offered the Mannerists a magnificent stage to express their taste for movement, exuberant ornamentation and luxury clothing as can be seen here. With its curved upper border, the triptych refers to the typical format of early sixteenth century altarpieces.
4. The tall proportions of the figures, especially of King Balthazar in the left foreground, is typical of the Master of 1518, and can also be observed in the Adoration of the Magi from the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels (inv. 2599). As in the Dresden and Vitoria Altarpieces, the old King kneeling before the Infant Christ has a similar narrow face with a small triangular beard, shown in full profile (cf. G. Marlier: *La Renaissance flamande*. Pierre Coeck d'Alost, ill. 40 and 55), while the Virgin's face is stylistically very close to the one in the Epiphany, formerly in the Barcilon collection (sold by Sotheby's New York, 28.1.2010, lot 152).
5. The Nativity and Circumcision illustrated on the wings belong to the traditional mannerist narrative form of the cycle. With its wealth of extravagant figures and decorative effects, the present painting perfectly illustrates the most modern component of the Antwerp art market's taste around 1525.
6. Notamment chez Xénophon, admirateur du modèle spartiate.